COMIC SHOP NEWS

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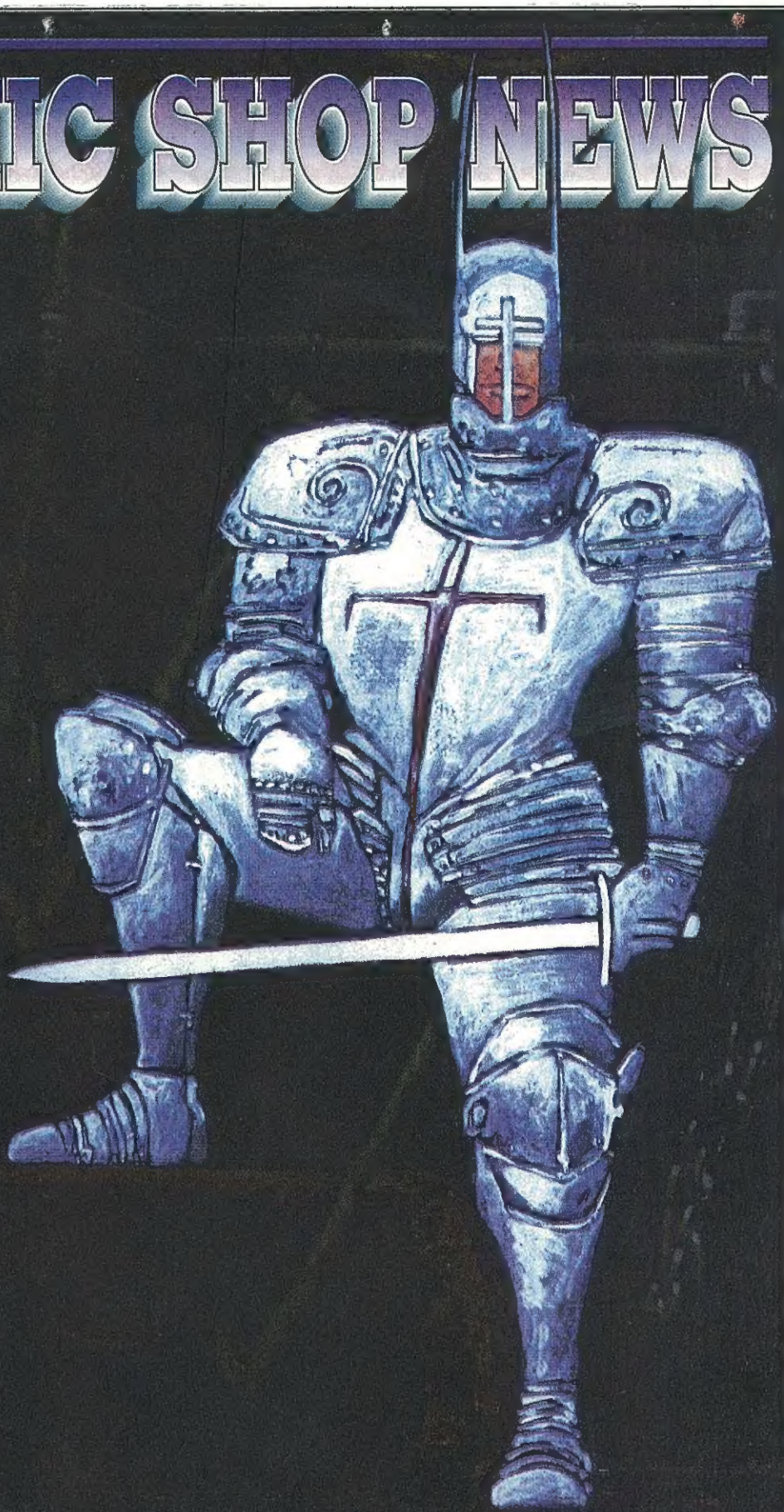

LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT 75

Batman ™ & ©1995 DC Comics, ARR.

Another Not-So-Dark Knight

One of the more intriguing Batman costumes in quite a while has no connection to the many different designs spotlighted in KnightGallery; instead, it's the creation of a demented mind.

In Ted McKeever's two-part "Engines" appearing in ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #s 74 & 75***, readers are allowed to see Batman through the eyes of Eustace, a slaughterhouse worker who can no longer differentiate between the animals that he kills and the human beings that he stalks through the streets of Gotham. While Batman recognizes Eustace as a killer who must be stopped, Eustace sees himself and Batman as having a great deal in common. As Batman stalks the killer to end his murder spree, Eustace's mind envisions a grand adventure in which he and the Dark Knight are working to defeat a common enemy created from the corruption of Gotham City.

Undoubtedly Ted McKeever's rendition of Batman is more offbeat than anything featured previously in ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight***—however, since readers are seeing the story entirely through the eyes of a disturbed killer, Batman becomes both monster and hero as the killer perceives him in different ways. As a result, readers are treated to different versions of Batman, including the stunning armored crusader of good featured on the cover of ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #75.***

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #74 is scheduled for June 29th release; the second part of the story follows on July 27th. Each installment is priced at $1.95.

by Cliff Biggers

Knight-Time Fashions

This past winter, Batman underwent his first major costume revision in thirty years—but most fans don't realize that the redesigned costume they saw in a four-part storyline was chosen from a large number of designs submitted by some of the best-known Batman-illustrators still working in comics today. Later this summer, however, DC will offer readers a rare glimpse at the wide range of designs as submitted by the industry's top talents.

Batman: KnightGallery, a 32-page no ads one-shot in DC's MiraWeb format, features some of the designs for both Batman and Robin costumes that were submitted by such artists as Neal Adams, Jim Aparo, Jim Balent, Bret Blevins, Norm Breyfogle, Vince Giarrano, Tom Grummett, Tom Lyle, Mike Manley, Graham Nolan, and George Perez. Some of the designs are only moderately different from the Batman costume most fans have grown up with; other designs, however, are such radical departures that fans will scarcely recognize them as the Dark Knight's togs. ***Batman: KnightGallery***, a $3.50 comic, is scheduled for August 10th release.

Later that same month, DC is following up this unusual gallery with a comic book that makes use of many of the designs featured in ***KnightGallery. Batman: Brotherhood of the Bat*** is a 48-page Elseworlds one-shot that takes place in an alternate reality in which Bruce Wayne has lost his life in his war against crime, leaving the city without a Batman. The void is filled not by a single replacement, though, but by a strange cabal of Batmen, each wearing a costume inspired by the original Dark Knight (and, oddly enough, by some of the designs featured in ***KnightGallery***!). These Batmen aren't quite as altruistic as their namesake, though; they've shut down criminal activity not in order to make Gotham City a safer place for its citizenry, but in order to clear the way for their mysterious master to execute his own plans.

One man is unwilling to let the Batman name be tarnished in this way, though—for he claims to be the true inheritor of the Batman mantle. One by one, he faces off against the pretenders to the Batman name, working his way up to the mastermind who gave the orders to the rogue Knights.

Batman: Brotherhood of the Bat is written by Doug Moench and inked by Josef Rubinstein; the pencil art for this series is supplied by many of the artists who designed to costumes featured in ***KnightGallery***, including Jim Aparo, Jim Balent, Bret Blevins, Norm Breyfogle, Vince Giarrano, Tom Grummett, Mike Manley, and Graham Nolan; each illustrates the segment featuring his own costume design. The $4.95 one-shot is scheduled for August 31st release.

Clothes may make the man—but as this pair of unique offerings prove, its what's inside those clothes that makes the Batman!

by Cliff Biggers

Marvel Pushes Punisher Over the Edge

The events of ***Punisher: Countdown*** have changed the Punisher's life inexorably: his former friend, MicroChip, is dead after a battle with the Punisher himself; his war against crime has been sidetracked as he desperately struggles to stay alive against almost impossible odds; and one by one, his tools of war have been taken away, forcing him to rely on his own wits and little else. It's no wonder that he ultimately snaps, becoming the driven killing machine that his enemies had always thought he was.

But he hasn't lost sight of one goal: his desire to avenge the deaths of his wife and children. And now he's convinced that Nick Fury is the man responsible for those deaths... and that means that Nick Fury is a marked man, unless he can find the Punisher and neutralize him first.

Over The Edge is the story of a war between two of Marvel's best-known characters: the one-man war machine and the leader of Marvel's most power covert operations organization. But it's not just a story of two men; before it's over, the Punisher will enlist the aid of several heroes who have their own axes to grind with Nick Fury and SHIELD... and by the time the battle comes to an end, one of these men will be dead.

Over the Edge begins in ***Double Edge: Alpha,*** a 48-page no-ads deluxe-format special issue highlighted by a chromium wraparound cover. In this issue, Larry Hama, Kerry Gammill, and Tom Palmer launch the Punisher's death-hunt for Nick Fury; this $4.95 special issue is scheduled for July 6th release.

From there, the action continues into ***Daredevil #344*** (July 13th), a J.M. DeMatteis/Ron Wagner/ Bill Reinhold story in which the war between the Punisher and Nick Fury expands to encompass Daredevil as well... but Daredevil can't spend too much time worrying about that, because someone has also targeted him for death!

The Punisher enlists the aid of Ghost Rider in ***Ghost Rider #65,*** written by Howard Mackie and illustrated by Salvador Larroca and Sergio Melia. Since SHIELD is the group that jailed Ghost Rider for a time, it's not too hard for the Punisher to convince the Spirit of Vengeance that Nick Fury is a perfect target for that vengeance. ***Ghost Rider #65*** is scheduled for July 20th release.

Dr. Strange becomes involved in the fray in ***Dr. Strange #81***, written by Warren Ellis and illustrated by Mark Buckingham and Kevin F. Sutherland. Both the Punisher and Ghost Rider are hot on Nick Fury's trail, so he's come to Doctor Strange's house for help... but Strange may be unwilling to involve himself in the battle! ***Dr. Strange #81*** is slated for July 27th release.

The Punisher really brings in the heavy armament in ***Incredible Hulk #433,*** when he enlists the Hulk to help him in his war against Nick Fury. The friction between the Hulk and Fury goes back a ways, so the Punisher has little trouble convincing the greenskinned goliath to become his ally. At the same time, Nick Fury calls on Scorpio to join his side, and the battle lines are drawn. ***Incredible Hulk #433*** is scheduled for July 27th release.

The storyline comes to an end on August 3rd with the release of ***Double Edge: Omega,*** a second $4.95 no-ads deluxe-format comic complete with chromium cover. In this landmark issue, a major figure in the Marvel Universe dies, changing Marvel history forever. The events of this issue will shake up the Marvel Edge titles for months to come, leading to some other major changes down the line.

When the Punisher goes **Over the Edge**, Nick Fury may discover that there's no one in the Marvel Universe who can shield him from one man's wrath!

by Alex Kirkland

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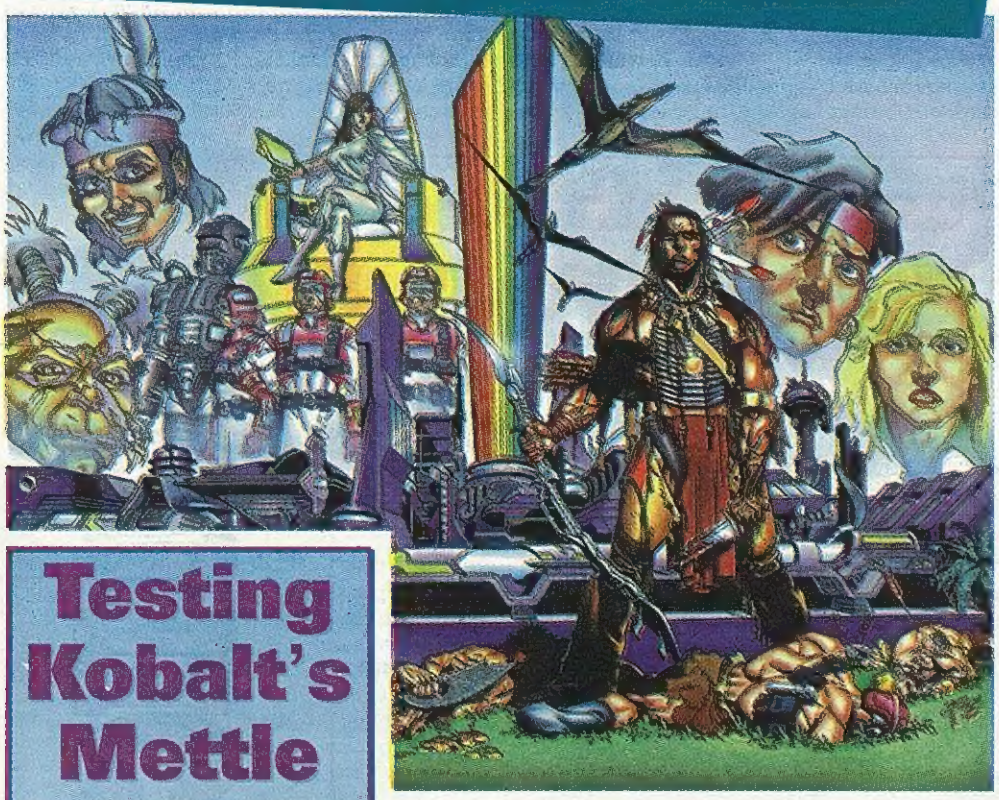
Somewhere In the Black Hills of South Dakota



How does a Kiowa from the Black Hills end up in a land of dinosaurs? That's the question that will finally be answered in ***Turok, Dinosaur Hunter #0,*** a special origin issue that fills in all the gaps in the story of Turok and Andar. *Timothy Truman* and *Rags Morales* explore Turok and his tribe's migration from the Black Hills in the 1600's, the story of Turok's early relationship with Andar and their travels through the amazing Lost Land, Turok's involvement in both invasions of the Lost Land, his return to the modern world, and his struggle to teach Andy the old ways of their people. This story marks the first time in over a third of a century that Turok's full origin has been revealed, making it just as historic for old-time Turok fans as for Valiant newcomers. ***Turok, Dinosaur Hunter #0***, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for mid-July release.

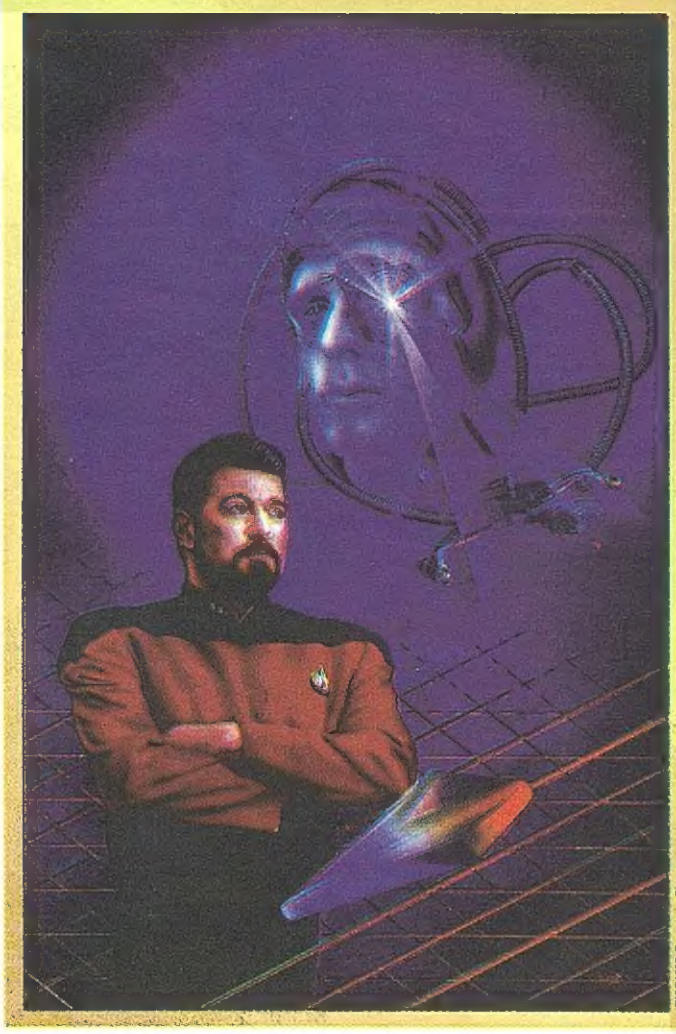
Testing Kobalt's Mettle

The end of ***Kobalt***? Well, it's definitely the end of the series... but is it the end of the hero as well? It very well could be, as Kobalt is forced to choose between getting his final revenge on Milton St. Cloud and company, who have gained control of Dakota's underworld, and saving the lives of innocent victims—including Page. This 48-page issue by *Rozum, Battle, and Quijano* features a can't-miss cover by Kent Williams; look for the $3.95 ***Kobalt #16***, the series finale, on July 27th.

CSNsider

Dan Jurgens, acclaimed writer/artist of ***Superman*** and ***Solar***, was honored with a Reuben Award in the Comic Book category from the National Cartoonists Society ... *Angel Medina* has signed on to replace *Liam Sharp* as the artist on ***Incredible Hulk***; Medina had previously worked with Hulk writer *Peter David* on ***Dreadstar***... And speaking of ***The Incredible Hulk,*** *Peter David* has written an original Hulk novel for Putnam's; look for it to appear in hardcover in July... Acclaimed animator *Friz Freleng* died on May 26th at the age of 89; during his career, Freleng worked on a number of Warner Bros. cartoons, including Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and the Road Runner... Look for a ***Sovereign Seven retail poster*** in August, with a ***Sovereign Seven Annual*** following in the fall... *Tom DeFalco* is moving over to become the writer of ***Amazing Spider-Man,*** working with artist *Mark Bagley*... The on-again, off-again quest to bring *Stephen King*'s stories to comics is on again, with two different companies talking about licensing King tales for comics adaptations... *Pamela Anderson* is set to begin work on the ***Barb Wire*** film, based on the Dark Horse Heroes character; the film is slated for '96 release... With the price of newsprint and other forms of paper used in comic book printing soaring to record highs, another round of price increases are almost inevitable later this year; in the past year, the prices of various grades of paper have risen 54% to 148%, and more increases are likely—so when you see a higher price on the cover of you're favorite comic, there's a reason why! Some publishers are considering reducing the number of pages and maintaining the same price, but no decisions have been made yet... *Charles Vess*, acclaimed comic book artist and cover illustrator, is venturing into the world of self-publishing with the release of ***The Book of Ballads and Sagas*** this October; Vess will illustrate ballads written by *Neil Gaiman, Jeff Smith, Elaine Lee, Sharyn McCrumb, Jane Yolen, Emma Bull,* and others, while *Rob Walton* will script the ongoing Nordic saga... *Alan Moore* has signed on to write a story arc for Maximum Press' ***WarChild*** series... Dark Horse Comics has confirmed that they have secured the license to bring Hasbro's ***GI Joe*** to comics once again; look for Dark Horse's first ***GI Joe*** titles this fall... *Diane Duane's* second original ***Spider-Man*** novel for Putnam's is scheduled for fall release... Fleer's first Marvel Comics collectible trading card game is now slated for late summer/early fall release... Claypool Comics has announced that ***Phantom of Fear City #12***, which will bring the series' long-running storylines to a close, will be the final issue of the maxiseries... *Darren McGavin*, star of the 1970's ***Kolchak the Night Stalker*** television series that many see as a precursor to today's ***X-Files,*** recently confirmed that conversations have taken place to have him guest star on an episode of ***X-Files,*** but contractual problems concerning the defunct series currently stand in the way... Is Paramount looking at starting its own comic book line? Could be!

A Star Is Borg



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The war gets a little bit more deadly in the finale to "War and Madness," the five-part storyline that culminates in the 56-page ***Star Trek: The Next Generation #75.*** The tensions between the Federation, the Klingons, and the Tholians have escalated to open conflict, and no one is really sure how relations deteriorated so rapidly. The crew of the Enterprise discovers who's behind the conflict, though: the Borg are back. If the Enterprise hopes to avert outright interstellar war, they'll have to call on the help of Hugh, the Borg they once befriended... but he's out of touch somewhere deep within hostile Tholian space. The only solution Riker can see is to commandeer a Tholian starship and begin the quest for the one Borg who may be able to avert a tragic war of truly epic proportions. ***Star Trek: The Next Generation #75,*** a $3.95 comic written by *Michael Jan Friedman* and illustrated by *Gordon Purcell* and *Terry Pallot*, is scheduled for July 27th release; *Sonia Hillios* supplies the cover painting for this extra-length issue.

The Art of War

Shi: The Way of the Warrior, *William Tucci*'s high-impact martial arts series depicting the exploits of a sensual and deadly martial artists, has very quickly become one of the most successful independent comics on the stands. In fact, virtually the only complaint about the book is that it doesn't come out frequently enough; readers want more Shi!

And readers will get more Shi beginning in July with the release of ***Shi: Senryaku***, a three-issue miniseries that will depict the Japanese martial classic ***The Thirty-Six Strategies.*** "The essence of asian warfare is embodied in the martial classics of Japan and China. ***The Thirty-Six Strategies*** are at the heart of Shi's war against the Yakuza, a guide to deception, misdirection, and how to capitalize on the weaknesses of your foe," *Gary Cohn*, ***Shi*** editor, said. "In this miniseries, Shi portrays each of the strategies, and we've gotten the very best artists in comics to illustrate the book, while Billy [William Tucci, ***Shi*** creator] and I will be writing the accompanying prose." Among the artists whose work will be presented in this illustration-and-text miniseries are *Jim Lee, Dave Sim, Geoff Darrow, Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, Nelson,* and *Tucci* himself. ***Shi: Senryaku #1,*** a $2.95 comic, is scheduled for late July release.

COMIC SHOP NEWS

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Editorial Office:
2339 Milstead Circle
Marietta, GA 30066
fax (404) 973-6949
cliffbig@jupiter.netdepot.com

Business Office:
1266 W. Paces Ferry Rd. #445
Atlanta, GA 30327
(404) 261-8101
wardo@jupiter.netdepot.com

Visit our WWW site at:
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Editors
Cliff Biggers & Ward Batty

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The Real Peach? Melba, Melba Not

While ***Desert Peach***, the story of Erwin Rommell's oh-so-handsome and much less macho brother, is inexorably linked to creator *Donna Barr*, that doesn't mean that Donna Barr is the only creator who'd like to try his or her hand at a ***Desert Peach*** tale. Judging from the wide range of creators featured in ***The Ersatz Peach,*** an eighty-page compilation of new stories by a variety of creators. Contributors to this volume include *Barb Rausch, Matt Howarth, Jim Groat, Howard Stangroom, John MacLeod, Teri Wood, Brad Foster,* and *Spain Rodriguez*. And to top it all off, *Donna Barr* supplies a new four-page story available nowhere Else. ***The Ersatz Peach,*** a $7.95 book, i s scheduled for July release.

At the same time, Æon Press, in conjunction with Thoughts & Images Press (the original publishers of ***Desert Peach***), has announced a reprinting of the first three issues of ***Desert Peach*** in a trade paperback appropriately entitled ***Beginnings.*** This 104-page collection offers readers an easy, affordable way to enjoy a trio of a very hard-to-find early Donna Barr comics presented in the same format as Æon's more recent collections. ***The Desert Peach: Beginnings,*** a $12.95 book, is scheduled for mid-July release; both books are recommended for mature readers.

The Morph The Merrier

The Power Rangers are zeroing in on theaters this summer—and at the same time, Marvel is doing its part to help enhance the Rangers' prominence on comic shop racks. *Nel Yomtov* and *Ron Lim* have been tapped to bring the film to comics in a 48-page movie adaptation. ***The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers Movie Adaptation*** is being offered as a single 48-page deluxe-format book with a cardstock cover priced at $3.95, or as a shrinkwrapped two-issue standard-format 32-page comic series (complete with bonus photos and pinups) bargain-priced at $2.49. Both versions are slated for July 6th release.

At the same time, Marvel will launch the first issue of ***Saban's Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers Magazine,*** a 32-page magazine-sized publication that offers pull-out posters, profiles of the new Rangers, a six-page comics, and behind-the-scenes coverage of their live tours and the upcoming film. ***Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers Magazine #1,*** a $2.50 publication aimed at readers of all ages, is scheduled for July 6th release.

Four Score Pages and Four Stories Ago

Okay, Radioactive Man fans, start planning your trip to the comic shops now. This summer, Bongo Comics is recreating the sixties again in ***Radioactive Man 80-Page Colossal #10*** (don't let that number fool you; it's the first issue of this giant-sized series), a comic book bonanza that recreated the excitement and immensity of the Silver Age annuals. This special issue features four new Radioactive Man tales, including the story of his marriage to arch-villainess Larva Girl; his use of rock 'n' roll to defeat Larceny Lass and her juvenile delinquent gang members; his meeting with Gloria Grand, who travels from 1955 to the present to meet the Radioactive Man of 1995; and the origin of Glowy, the Radioactive Dog. And did we mention such extras as a classic Radioactive Ape story, a special "How to Draw Radioactive Man the Bongo Way" feature, a map of his headquarters, an advice column, and more?! ***Radioactive Man 80-Page Colossal #10,*** a $4.95 comic, is scheduled for mid-July '95 release—but once you pick it up, you might have to check the calendar twice to make sure it's not 1965 instead!

HUNT OR BE HUNTED.
TUROK. IN JUNE.
31 & 32: ALL OUT DINOSAUR WAR IN THE LOST LAND.
BY TIMOTHY TRUMAN & PAUL GULACY.
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John Byrne

by Cliff Biggers

Saying that an author or artist needs no introduction might seem clichéd—but if the statement applies to any creator working in the field today, it applies to John Byrne. From the time John Byrne moved to Marvel in the mid-1970's after working at smaller companies like Charlton, he made himself known through his innovative work and clean art style. When he joined Chris Claremont on X-Men, he rose to superstar status; from there, he moved on to Fantastic Four, proving himself as capable a writer as he is an artist. Then, in 1986, Byrne did the unimaginable: he remade Superman into a hero for modern times, making changes in an almost canonical Superman mythos. Since that time, Byrne has worked on a variety of characters for a variety of companies—She-Hulk for Marvel; OMAC for DC; and Next Men, Babe, and Danger Unlimited for the creator-owned Dark Horse Legend line. Beginning this summer, Byrne returns to DC where he offers his interpretation of one of DC's oldest characters, Wonder Woman. Between pages of that book, Byrne squeezed in a few minutes to talk to CSN about his take on Wonder Woman, as well as other projects in the works.

How did you end up doing Wonder Woman, since you've already said you weren't a long-time fan of the character?

They asked! Well, actually, it was Paul Kupperberg, the editor of Wonder Woman and an old friend—he and I go back dangerously close to twenty-five years—who called me up on January 3rd and asked me if I would be interested in writing ***Wonder Woman***. I said, "Well, if I were going to do it at all, I'd probably want to draw it as well."

"Well, by amazing coincidence," he said, "the artist is also leaving!" I guess he didn't think I'd want to commit to anything that much. Anyway, I thought about it for a couple of days, and two days later I called him up and said, "You bastard, my head is now full of Wonder Woman stories, so I guess I have to do this!"

Are you particularly interested in the mythological aspects of Wonder Woman?

I'm playing her as a superhero. There's going to be some mythological stuff, because obviously that's an important part of her trappings, but it's not going to be a main theme any longer.

I hadn't been following the book recently; the last time I had read Wonder Woman, in fact, was George Perez's first year. So I'm introducing an all-new cast. I'm using Darkseid in the first story arc; I've co-opted Morgan LeFay from Kirby's Demon for the second arc. And I have an idea—a kind of vague idea—for a Cheetah story. Unfortunately, though, Wonder Woman's rogues' gallery is pretty lame—

And you've already had your stint with lame villains on She-Hulk...

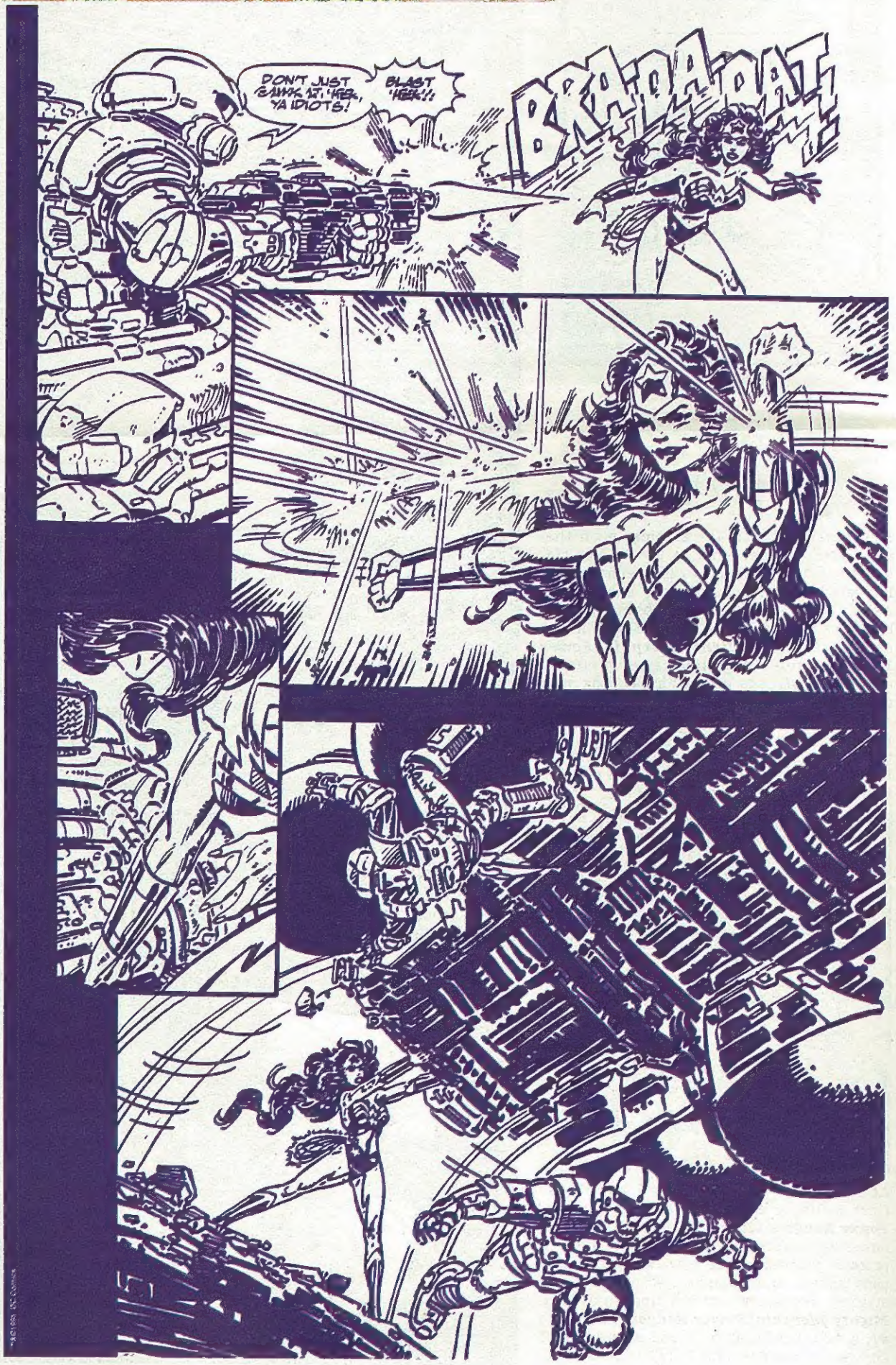
—Right! And after all, how much can you do with Egg Foo? So for the most part, what I'm trying to do is to add a supporting cast. I'm creating at least one new character, and that character will actually give me access to other characters because of the way the story is structured. I'll be able to use certain other characters who would not normally be associated with Wonder Woman because of this new character.

She's going to meet some pretty big guns, including—dum dum dummmm—Doomsday. She'll probably need some help with that one, of course...

Is Brian Bolland going to continue doing the covers?

No; actually, it turns out that I'm the cover artist from the get-go. Brian was supposed to be the cover artist, but for some reason—I'm not sure why—he asked off. The reason he gave was that having done forty of them, he pretty much had explored that as much as he wanted to. Of course, I've been saying that he didn't want to be compared to me... (laughs)

Actually, what I did say to Paul Kupperberg when Brian was supposed to be doing this was, "Please ask Brian to not use what I did for the splash page for the cover," because I don't want anyone to turn from that magnificent Brian Bolland cover to my less magnificent version of



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the same thing, shall we say. Just having been to Paul's office and seeing what passes for cover sketches that Brian sends in, which are fully rendered pencil drawings—three or four for each cover—I can see why he can't do a book!

You mentioned Darkseid, who seems to be very big in your DC plans. You have a Darkseid-Galactus book coming up, and that predates Wonder Woman. Where did the idea for that come from?

It actually came about at a convention in Detroit. A fan came up who I thought was just a kid, but he turned out to be about twenty-two years old; he said that he'd loved my stuff since he was a kid, and when he was twelve years old, he'd actually written a story that he'd never gotten around to sending me. It was, as he phrased it, "Galactus tries to eat Apokolips." George Perez was sitting next to me at the table; George and I sort of looked at each other and I said, "We get paid to come up with this kind of stuff; how come we didn't think of that?"

I came back home, but I couldn't get this thing out of my head. A week later, as a kind of a goof, I called Mike Carlin at DC, and I said, "Listen, I don't know if DC and Marvel are doing any crossovers, but would they be interested in doing this one?" He got all excited about it, then Mark Gruenwald got all excited about it, and then I said, "Oops! Now I've got to find that guy and give him credit."

I did; thankfully, I was able to find him. I stuck several notifications in various places, over at Dark Horse mostly. Barbara Kesel had the best idea; instead of just being very cryptic and saying "tell me what it was you suggested and where it was you suggested it," she added "and include a photograph." I said, "Oh, of course!" He did, and he convinced me that it was him. He'll get a t-shirt—"John Byrne did this great crossover and all I got was this lousy T-Shirt..."

This story takes place much earlier in DC/Marvel continuity, right?

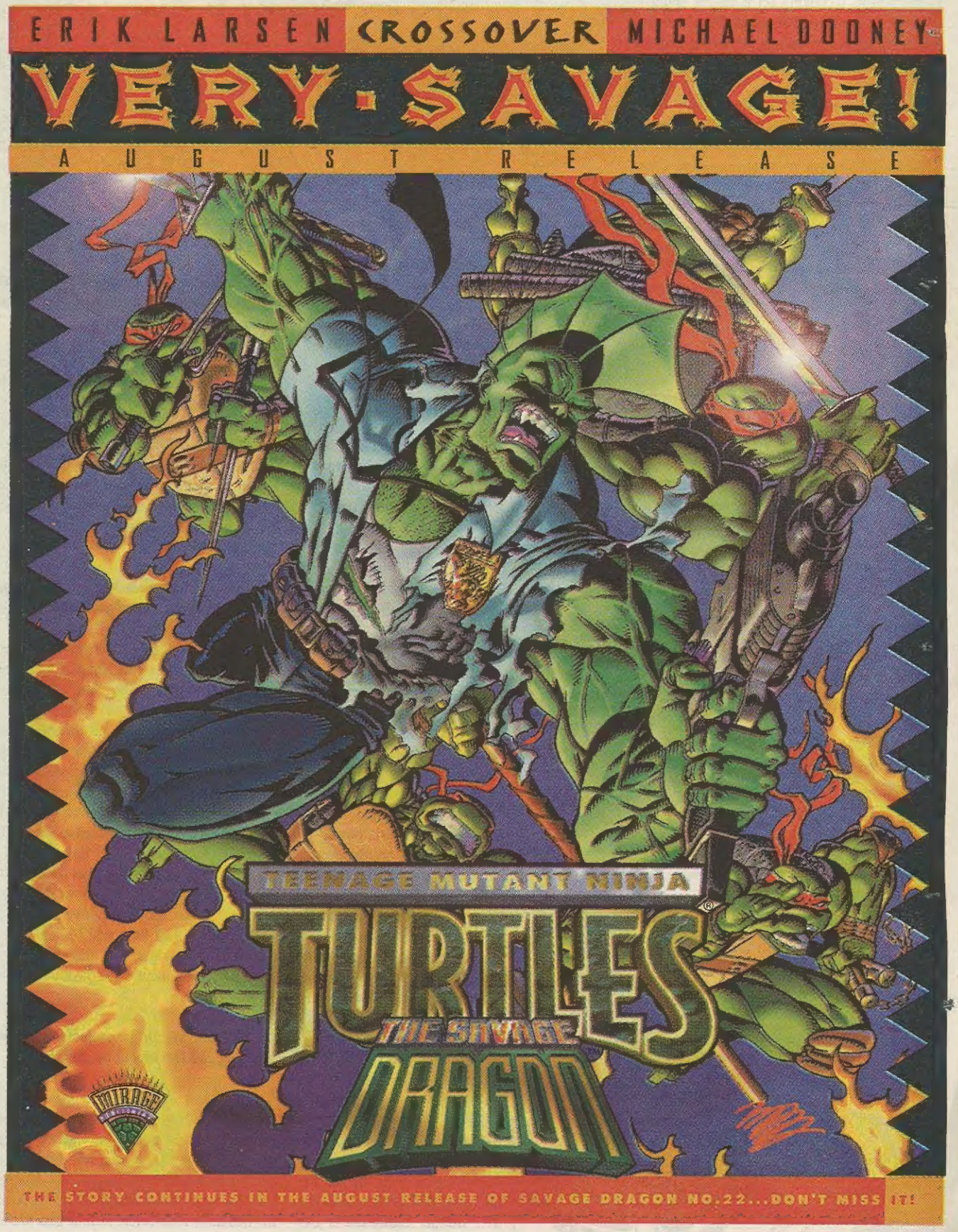
It's set before Galactus came to Earth, so the Silver Surfer is still his herald. Mike Carlin pointed out that, chronologically, this is the first Marvel-DC crossover. It was a lot of fun to do—it's all finished now, and it'll be out in August.

When I first suggested it, a lot of people said, "Oh, Superman versus the Fantastic Four!" I said, "No!" Basically, it really is Darkseid versus Galactus; the Surfer is in it, Orion is in it, the Black Racer has a two panel walk-on—or glide-on, as the case may be...

It sounds like it casts Darkseid almost in the role of reluctant hero...

It comes pretty close. I also play Galactus as a very noble character. It's basically these two primordial forces, really. The biggest challenge, since I'd upped the ante on Galactus so much when I was restoring him to anything like his former glories at Marvel, was figuring out a way to make the story last more than three panels. Galactus theoretically should be able to take out Darkseid fairly easily... but he doesn't! I managed to make the story last for forty-eight pages!

Ralph Simpson, who's the editor on the project and the ***New Gods*** editor, was bubbling over with ideas. At one point, he said, "Maybe we can say that it was the encounter with Galactus that inspired Darkseid to go and search out the Anti-Life Equation." I said, "That's cool, but do you really want something that important to Darkseid to be something you can never mention again?"



I wondered if any of this story would make it into continuity...

I doubt it. It would be very hard to do it. It certainly makes my head hurt trying to figure out how to make all this fit into continuity...

Does it seem at all odd coming back to an established superhero universe after doing your own worlds for so long?

It was very strange coming back. There were several mechanical differences. For one thing, I wrote a full script so that Marvel and DC could sign off on it and I wouldn't have to mess with the artwork at all. As a result of having a full script lying in front of me, I decided to take the rather unusual approach of drawing it out of order. I didn't draw the first page first and the last page last; instead, I grabbed pages at random and drew those. As a result, the first page that I drew is either the tenth or the eleventh page in the book—it's the first shot of the Silver Surfer. And then, I did something I almost never do: I redrew that page three times. I just wasn't happy with it. I couldn't get it cosmic enough. After three years of ***The Next Men***, bringing everything down and making everything real, I'd lost my cosmic for a while. It took me three goes to get it back.

The main advantage to drawing it out of order is... well, I'm a monthly book guy. I really need that next issue to get me through the issue I'm working on. When you're doing a one-shot, there is no next issue. I've tended to find that on miniseries and one-shots, the last six pages or so really don't do it for me; I seem to lose something. The advantage here, of course, is that by drawing it all out of order, the last six pages are mixed into the book; the last six pages aren't the last six pages.

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Maybe we could have a contest: guess which order John Byrne drew the book in!

Well, I actually numbered the pages on the back in the order that I did them, so at least I know what order I drew them in.

You mentioned Next Men back there; are you going to do something else with Next Men, or will you have time?

Well, my mad plan at the moment is to bring ***Next Men*** back sometime early in '96 as a series of prose novels with illustrations, rather than as a comic book. That way, I can take it to the next level, take it to places that I haven't taken it yet. I had issue thirty-one all written, so I've been playing around on the computer, converting that issue into the first four or five chapters of a novel. This will be done through Dark Horse; they've done ***Aliens*** novels in trade paperback and hardcover before, so they're experienced with this. The inspiration for this is something that Larry Niven did about fifteen years ago, a book called ***The Patchwork Girl;*** I think the illustrations for that were done by Esteban Maroto.

Do you have plans for a third Babe series, or for Danger Unlimited?

I'd like to do at least one more ***Babe,*** if only so that I can use the E backwards for the 3 in the title. And ***Danger Unlimited***—well, ***Danger Unlimited*** is less dead than it would have been a year ago... but that's not saying much.

Are you waiting for a market turnaround, or are you holding off until you're more enthusiastic?...

A little bit of both, actually. That's the reason that ***Next Men***'s hiatus has turned out to be as long as it has; I had originally planned to put it on hiatus for about four months, and then late last year the bottom fell out of the market. I said, "If I bring it back now, it's going to vanish without a trace, so let's hold off and see where we end up." I don't see much sign of a bottom yet, actually, the market still seems to be a mess...

I heard that you were making a very generous donation of some of your royalties...

Yes. When I first agreed to do this, I had decided to donate a portion of my royalties to the educational fund that Roz Kirby had set up in Jack Kirby's name.

Speaking of Jack Kirby, just last week, Marvel inadvertently paid me one of the highest compliments of my career. They did this trade paperback reprint of Lee-Kirby stuff and of my stuff entitled The Villains of the Fantastic Four. I saw something that I never expected to see. The listing for the authors said "Lee, Kirby, Byrne." The fanboy in me just fell flat on his back, I tell you! There was some sort of puffery on the back that described me as one of the three greatest comic book creators of all time, and I said, "yeah yeah yeah, right right right," but that didn't measure up to seeing my name right there with Stan and Jack.

Do you have any other projects in the works that you can talk about at this time?

Well, just last week I got the green light to do another crossover, but I don't know if I can really reveal what it is right now. Having the green light still leaves us a long way from having it actually turn into a real project. It's another one that I'm very excited about, but it'll probably be the middle of 1996 before anyone gets to see it.

Didn't you recently do a Captain America drawing that Joe Simon inked?

Yes, for **Marvel Age** or one of those **Marvel Previews** or something. Steve Saffel contacted me and asked if I would do a cover that Joe Simon would ink. It turned out to be a great disappointment to me: the reason that I agreed to do it was that Joe Simon was going to ink it, which would give me a piece of Captain America art by me inked by Joe Simon to hang on my wall—and then Joe Simon inked it on overlay, so all I got was my pencils back!... The fanboy in me is still out here trying to have fun, and that sounded like a hoot!

Is the fanboy in you still looking for a dream project, or has it all fallen your way already?

No, it hasn't all fallen my way. In fact, one of the things, now that I'm sort of playing at DC again, that was almost immediately brought up is the Doom Patrol. We have nothing definite on that. ***Doom Patrol*** had been a Vertigo book for a while, but now it's been cancelled; they want to give readers a chance to forget the Doom Patrol for a while before bringing it back, though.

Actually, it was kind of funny; shortly after I went back to DC, I was talking about the Doom Patrol with someone, and I realized that the Doom Patrol isn't a knockoff of the X-Men, as so many people have unfairly claimed—but then I suddenly realized that it isn't the X-Men at all, but it's the Fantastic Four! You've got the smart guy, the tragic hero, the flamboyant hero, and the girl with the oddly ineffectual powers. I thought, "Boy, I could go miles with my old Fantastic Four hat on, doing the Doom Patrol."

I'd love to see it...

You'll have to wait at least a couple of years to see it, though, at least for my schedule. I've been telling people like Mike Mignola and Paul Chadwick—who can summon no sympathy for me at all—that I'm down to two pages a day now. It impacts; you can't do three books a month when you're down to two pages a day!

Looking Into the Extreme Future of Image

Many of the familiar faces are gone... but not all. And even those who are no longer a part of the Image Universe have still left their marks on the history of this world, inspiring the heroes who have replaced them.

An imaginary, what if? story of the Image Universe? Not at all. This is the future of Image, a millennium away from today's exploits, and it's the focus of **Extreme 3000,** a new family of Image titles beginning this summer. ***Youngblood the NewMen, Prophet,*** and ***Supreme*** are the heroes of this far-future time—but while the names are familiar, most of the heroes aren't.

"These four books form the nucleus of the **Extreme 3000** Universe and will present readers with a tight, consistent world that defines the look for the Image Universe in the distant future," Extreme director of marketing Matt Hawkins said. "**Extreme 3000** is by no means to be mistaken with Marvel 2099. It is more in line with the Age of Apocalypse in that this is the timeline in which these characters interact. But unlike the Age of Apocalypse, this is not a 'what if?' fantasy or an Elseworlds-type story. This is the future of these characters. We usher it in when the one thousand year old Badrock arrives with the futuristic Youngblood in ***Team Youngblood #20*** to stop an aggressive act against the Katellan race that would forever alter the earth's future."

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Youngblood, the linchpin of the Extreme 3000 line, is now led by the millennium-old Badrock, who uses his centuries of experience to lead the team in enforcing martial law in the western hemisphere. While the other members of the original Youngblood are distant memories, Badrock's stone body has made him in effect immortal.

Youngblood's foil is ***The NewMen,*** a race of alien humans who secretly live among human beings. The Newmen have managed to attain positions of power within earth society—and, in fact, some have actually managed to infiltrate Youngblood itself! The Newmen hope to use their power to bring an end to the police state that Youngblood supports.

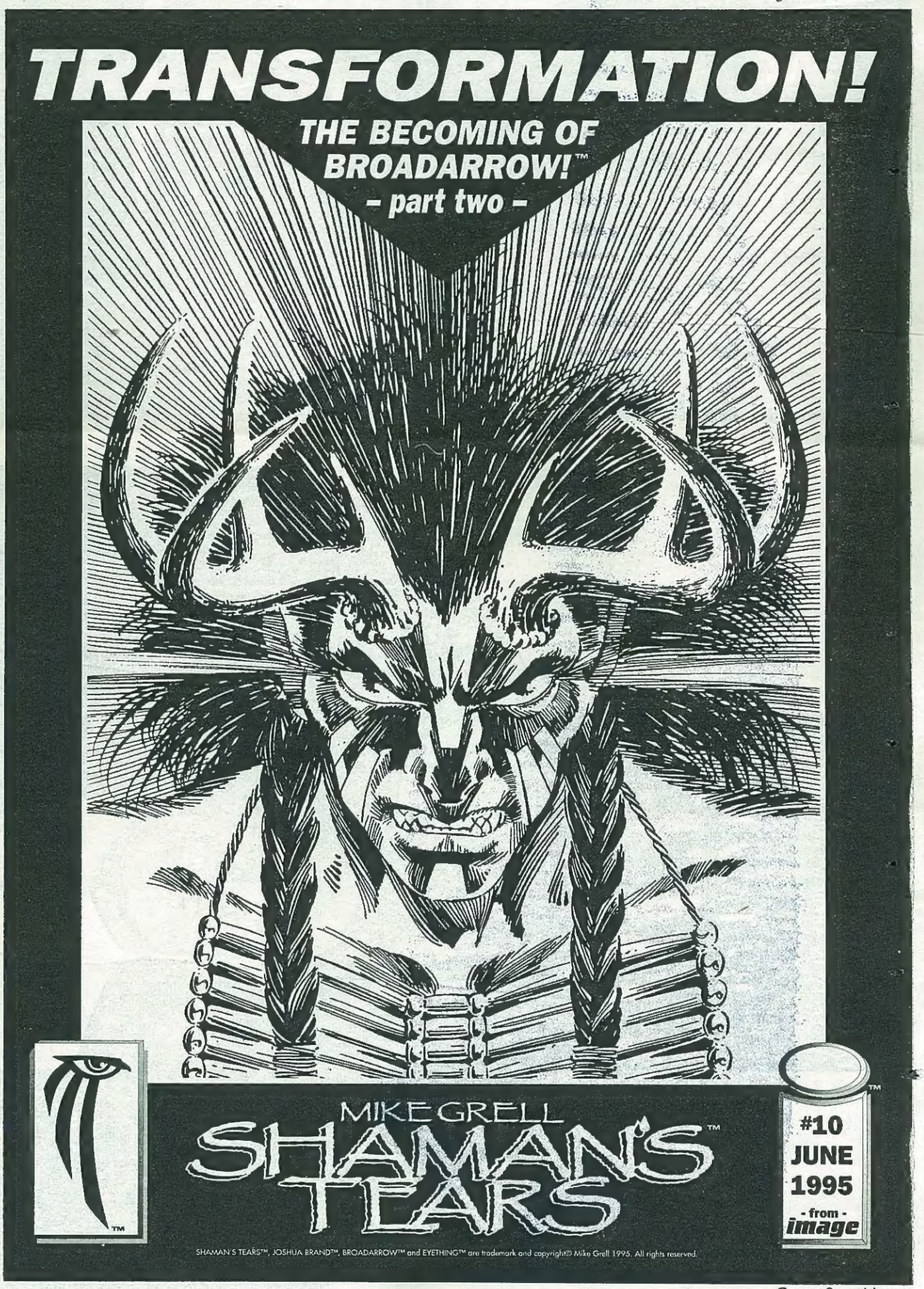
Frozen for centuries, ***Prophet*** is the hope for the future. The cryogenic capsule that holds his body may be hidden deep within the prison state of Manhattan, now a walled home to the most dangerous criminals of the Image Universe of the year 3000. Prophet is seen by many as the salvation of the Image Universe of the future—but no one knows for sure if this is the true Prophet!

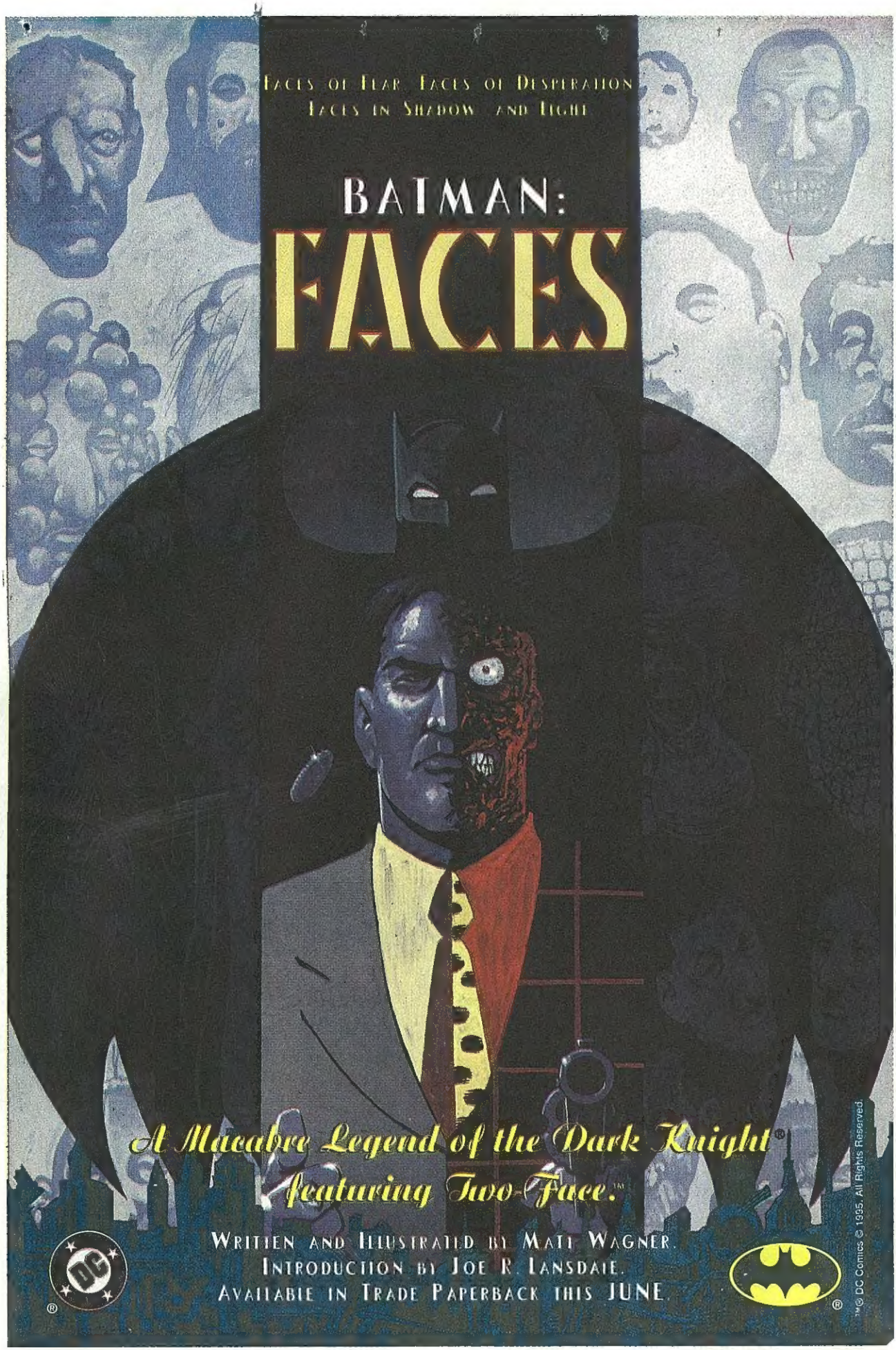
Finally, there's ***Supreme***—but we're not talking about not the Supreme of the present-day Image Universe. Instead, it's his offspring, each possessing various godlike powers inherited from their father. The extreme actions of the original Supreme are still remembered by the people who now fear that Supreme's descendants will use their abilities to quash any resistance.

"**Extreme 3000** is a cohesive storyline," Hawkins said, "a completely intact world. We're also talking with the other Image owners about the future of their characters in this aspect. Hawkins said that Image intends to draft top talent to work on the **Extreme 3000** books, and there will be some surprises when those creators are named.

Extreme 3000 begins in late July with the release of ***Team Youngblood #20,*** a prequel to this futuristic storyline; from there, the series will be unveiled in August and September, with additional series possible further down the line.

by Alex Kirkland

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